

Message Text

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ORIGIN SCCT-01

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-10 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05

INR-07 CIAE-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 L-03 DHA-02 PM-04 DODE-00

/080 R

DRAFTED BY S/CCT:RPMYERS, JR:IJG

APPROVED BY S/CCT - ROBERT A. FEAREY

AF/E - MR. COOTE

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P 232342Z OCT 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL ASMARA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 252913

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS

SUBJECT: KAGNEW 4

1. ON OCTOBER 22 DEPT OFFICER RECEIVED RUNDOWN FROM BOWIDOWICZ FAMILY MEMBERS ON ROBERTS' CONVERSATION WITH THEM. FOLLOWING ARE POINTS OF INTEREST.

2. ROBERTS CONFIRMED THAT KAGNEW II ARE BEING WELL TREATED BY ELF; THEIR LIVES ARE NOT BEING THREATENED. ELF HAS AN ENGLISH SPEAKING PERSON PRESENT TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEM. THERE IS EVEN A COOK WHO CAN PREPARE WESTERN STYLE FOOD, AND SOME FOOD IS BEING BROUGHT ACROSS THE BORDER FOR THEM. HOWEVER, THEY NEED MEDICINES, INCLUDING ANTIBIOTICS.

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3. ROBERTS STATED THE MEN WERE SUFFERING FROM DYSENTERY AND HAD LOST TWENTY POUNDS, BUT THAT THEIR PHYSICAL CONDITION HAD IMPROVED BETWEEN HIS FIRST AND SECOND CONTACTS WITH THEM. MOREOVER, THEIR WEIGHT LOSS WAS NOT UNUSUAL GIVEN THE RIGORS OF LIVING AND TRAVELLING UNDER SUCH PRIMITIVE CONDITIONS.

4. ROBERTS SAID THAT HIS CAMERAMAN HAS RETURNED TO ERITREA, FOLLOWING SAME ROUTE THEY HAD TAKEN PREVIOUSLY. CAMERAMAN HOPES TO SEE BOWIDOWICZ AND STRICKLAND AGAIN AND WOULD ALSO

LIKE TO SEE CISCO II IF POSSIBLE. ROBERTS PROMISED TO KEEP FAMILIES INFORMED OF ANY INFO GLEANED BY HIS CAMERAMAN ONCE HE HAS DEPARTED ETHIOPIA.

5. ROBERTS SAID THAT KAGNEW II WERE BEING HELD IN A TOWN APPROXIMATELY 10 KILOMETERS FROM SUDANESE BORDER BUT THAT THEY ARE CONSTANTLY ON THE MOVE. HE SAID MEN ARE IN NO DANGER BECAUSE THEY ARE NOW WELL INSIDE ELF TERRITORY. HE STATED, HOWEVER, THAT THE ETHIOPIANS HAD PREVIOUSLY BOMBED THREE VILLAGES WHILE MEN WERE THERE OR SHORTLY THEREAFTER.

6. ROBERTS SAID EPMG FORCES ARE QUOTE HOPELESS UNQUOTE AND OPINED THAT THERE IS NO CHANCE THAT EPMG COULD EFFECT RELEASE OF KAGNEW II. HE SUGGESTED FAMILIES WOULD BE WISE TO ADDRESS LETTERS DIRECTLY TO ELF LEADERSHIP IN STRAIGHT-FORWARD TERMS AND THAT HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO FORWARD THEM THROUGH HIS CHANNELS.

7. ROBERTS ALSO SUGGESTED THAT USG MIGHT DECREASE ITS AID TO EPMG OR THAT QUOTE FACE SAVING WAY UNQUOTE OUT OF PRESENT IMPASSE MIGHT BE FOR USG TO MAKE HIGHLY PUBLICIZED DONATION OF FUNDS OR COMMODITIES TO REFUGEES LIVING ON SUDANESE BORDER. DEPT OFFICER MADE IT CLEAR TO BOWIDOWICZES THAT, WHILE USG IS SYMPATHETIC WITH PLIGHT OF REFUGEES, IT WOULD NOT MAKE CONCESSIONS OF ANY KIND TO TERRORIST DEMANDS; HE SUGGESTED THAT FAMILIES ACCEPT ROBERTS' OFFER TO SERVE AS CONDUIT TO ELF. FAMILY MEMBERS SAID THEY UNDERSTOOD US NO-CONCESSION POLICY AND THAT THEY WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ROBERTS' OFFER TO FORWARD LETTERS

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AND PACKAGES THROUGH HIS CHANNEL TO ELF. THEY ALSO SAID THEY PLAN TO CALL CHIEF OF ETHIOPIAN UN MISSION TO REQUEST THAT EPMG FORCES REFRAIN FROM MILITARY ACTION IN AREAS WHERE KAGNEW II MIGHT BE HELD. INGERSOLL

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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06 JUL 2006

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